

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-06 IO-03 L-01 INR-05 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8750

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 4351

LIMDIS

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US, XF

SUBJ: THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GENEVA CONFERENCE

REF: MOSCOW 4244

1. WE HEAR FROM BOTH THE CANADIANS AND THE GERMANS HERE THAT THE
SOVIET EMBASSY IN CAIRO IS TAKING A MODERATE APPROACH TO THE SUSPENSION

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OF THE U.S. EFFORTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE RECONVENING OF GENEVA.

SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT POLYAKOV TOLD THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO THAT HE WAS DISTURBED AT THE SECRETARY'S FAILURE AND FEARED IT WOULD COMPLICATE THE GENEVA PROCESS. HE ALSO RECOMMENDED DEFERRING THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AT GENEVA UNTIL A LATER STAGE IN THE CONFERENCE. SIMILARLY, THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO WAS TOLD BY THE SOVIETS THERE THAT THERE WAS MUCH TO BE DONE BEFORE GENEVA COULD BE RECONVENED.

2. WE ARE ALSO GETTING EXPRESSIONS OF CAUTION ABOUT GENEVA FROM SOME SOVIET SOURCES IN MOSCOW. MFA DEPUTY CHIEF NEAR EAST COUNTRIES DEPARTMENT PYRLIN TOOK A FAIRLY RELAXED VIEW WITH US MARCH 26 ON TIMING FOR RESUMPTION OF THE MEPC, SUGGESTING THAT IT WOULD BE SOME TIME YET BEFORE THE GENEVA PROSPECTS BECOME CLEAR. (REFTEL). IN SIMILAR VEIN, USA INSTITUTE ME SPECIALIST A.K. KISLOV AND AFRICA INSTITUTE ME AUTHORITY IGOR BELYAYEV BOTH TOLD A VISITING U.S. SCHOLAR THIS WEEK THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WOULD REQUIRE CAREFUL PREPARATION. THEY SAID ITS RECONVENING WOULD BE DELAYED. USA INSTITUTE DEPUTY DIRECTOR ZHURKIN, OSTENSIBLY TAKING OPPOSING VIEW THAT CONFERENCE WOULD OPEN SOON, SAID HE THOUGH MEPC WOULD RECONVENE "NOT LATER THAN JUNE."

3. MFA USA DIVISION CHIEF KORNIYENKO DID NOT BUDGE FROM THE STANDARD SOVIET LINE ON GENEVA TIMING IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF MARCH 28. HE SAID THAT THE SOVIET POSITION REMAINED THAT GENEVA SHOULD BE RECONVENED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND HE NOTED THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING CONCRETE PROGRESS ON THE CONFERENCE BEFORE THE UNEF MANDATE COMES DUE FOR RENEWAL IN APRIL. ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGHT THE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION ISSUE SHOULD BE DEFERRED UNTIL SOME OTHER ISSUES HAD BEEN DEALT WITH AT GENEVA, KORNIYENKO SAID VEHEMENTLY THAT A FORMULA FOR PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION HAD TO BE WORKED OUT BEFORE THE CONFERENCE RECONVENED.

4. PUBLICLY THE SOVIET MEDIA CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE "QUICKETS" RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. PRAVDA'S COMMENTARY (MARCH 27), HOWEVER, APPEARED TO LAY ITS GREATEST STRESS NOT ON URGENCY OF TIMING BUT ON ASSERTION THAT U.S. AND ISRAEL MUST NOW FACE REALITIES AND DO EVERYTHING THEY CAN TO MAKE THE MEPC AN "EFFECTIVE" INSTRUMENT TO SOLVE ME PROBLEMS. ALSO SUGGESTIVE THAT THE SOVIETS MAY NOT PRESS FOR THE MEPC AT ONCE, PRAVDA (MARCH 28)
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FRONT-PAGED NOTICE THAT WORLD PEACE COUNCIL ON MARCH 27 CALLED FOR IMMEDIATE RESUMPTION OF MEPC BUT ANNOUNCED SIMULTANEOUSLY THAT WPC'S CONFERENCE IN PARIS TO DISCUSS THE ME SITUATION WILL TAKE PLACE MORE THAN A MONTH FROM NOW ON MAY 3-5.

5. COMMENT: WE THINK THE CAUTIOUS SOVIET LINE ON GENEVA REFLECTS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT WHAT POSITIONS THE ARABS ARE GOING TO ASSUME VIS-A-VIS THE CONFERENCE. MOREOVER, WITH GENEVA NOW APPARENTLY

IN THE CARDS, THE SOVIETS ARE COMPELLED TO RE-THINK THEIR POLICY, WHICH UNTIL NOW COULD AFFORD TO HAVE A MAINLY PROPAGANDISTIC FLAVOR. THEY MAY ALSO BE UNCONVINCED THAT THE SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BREAKDOWN OF HIS LAST MISSION SHOULD BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE. FOR EXAMPLT, USA INSITTUTE'S KISLOV TOLD EMBOFF ON MARCH 28 THAT HE WAS NOT YET CONVINCED EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS HAD ENDED WITHOUT SOME KIND OF "UNDERSTANDING". WE THINK THE SOVIETS WILL TAILOR THEIR ME POSITIONS TO DO WHAT THEY CAN TO REMOVE OBSTACLES STANDING IN GENEVA'S WAY. THEY MAY BE PREPARED TO TAKE A MORE SOBER VIEW OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH MUST BE CONFRONTED BEFORE THE CONFERENCE CAN HAVE ANY REAL CHANCE OF SUCCESS (E.G., THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION), AND THEY MAY BE MORE INCLINED TO ADOPT A POSTURE CONDUCIVE TO INFLUENCE BY THE U.S. BUT KORNIYENKO'S WORDS ALSO INDICATE THAT THEY ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE LEVERAGE THAT THE UNEF RENEWAL GIVES THEM. STOESEL

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